
**Early Learning & Children's
Services Committee**

HB 2597

Brief Description: Requiring the department of early learning and the office of the superintendent of public instruction to develop a kindergarten readiness assessment.

Sponsors: Representatives Sullivan, Pedersen, Hasegawa, Ormsby, Haigh, Chase, Green and Simpson.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Directs the Department of Early Learning, in consultation with the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction to develop a kindergarten readiness assessment.
- Requires all school districts to offer the kindergarten readiness assessment developed by the Department of Early Learning starting in 2010.

Hearing Date: 1/22/08

Staff: Brian Considine (786-7290).

Background:

The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) sponsored a survey of *Student Readiness for Kindergarten* in Washington State during the fall of 2004. A total of 398 kindergarten teachers responded to an invitation to participate in an online survey about student preparedness, the characteristics of their classes, and other information about incoming students. Through the survey, teachers reported that forty-four percent of the incoming students in 2004 were adequately prepared for kindergarten. Additionally, seventy-nine percent of teachers reported that they routinely screen or assess incoming kindergarten students in order to inform instruction.

In June 2005, Early Learning and Development Benchmarks were published for the Early Learning and Development Benchmarks Advisory Panel. The benchmarks broadly defined a set of statements that reflect expectations for children's knowledge and behavior. The benchmarks

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were designed to support the growth and development of young children from birth to kindergarten entry, whether the children are in their own homes, others' homes, in licensed child care, early intervention programs, Head Start, Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP), or in private or public school preschools. The benchmarks covered five domains: physical well-being, health, and motor development; social and emotional development; approaches toward learning; cognition and general knowledge; and language, literacy, and communication.

In 2006 The Department of Early Learning (DEL) was established as an executive branch agency whose primary duties are to implement early learning policy and to coordinate, consolidate, and integrate child care and early learning programs to promote an efficient use of funds.

Although a statewide standardized readiness assessment for kindergartners does not yet exist for Washington school districts, most districts utilize some type of kindergarten entry assessment. According to the OSPI, most districts and schools assess letter recognition, and many districts and schools assess knowledge of numbers or sounds. However, readiness assessments vary in terms of what is assessed, the types of tools used, and how the assessments are administered.

Summary of Bill:

The DEL, in consultation with OSPI, is required to develop a Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (Assessment) to be voluntarily field tested during the 2009-10 school year. School districts will be required to offer the assessment beginning with the 2010-11 school year.

Development of the Assessment

In developing the assessment, the DEL must:

- examine research on critical knowledge and skills for successful entry and progress in kindergarten;
- examine examples of assessments used by schools and providers in Washington and around the country; and
- address letters, sounds, numbers, number concepts, and social skills for a school environment.

Report on the Assessment

The DEL must submit a report to the Governor and the Legislature by January 10, 2009, on the following:

- the proposed readiness assessment;
- the assessment results reporting system;
- a professional development plan for individuals who will administer the assessment; and
- a plan for educating providers and parents about the assessment.

Once the assessment is implemented, school districts will be required to report the assessment results to parents or guardians, and the DEL will report results to the OSPI.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 21, 2008.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.